

## Amendments to the Claims

1. **(Currently Amended)** A device having a master function for use in a network system in which a master device manages at least one slave device, the device comprising:

~~a device's~~an own device information managing section operable to manage ~~device's~~ own ~~device information~~ information of the device, which includes at least predetermined information, regarding a state change of the device;

an other device information managing section operable to manage other device information regarding at least one ~~another~~ other device connected to the network system, the other device information including at least availability of the master function;

a schedule information managing section operable to manage schedule information indicative of master device candidates ~~by predetermined segment~~ by a plurality of segments of at least time of day or season;

a device information processing section operable, when the device operates as the master device, to specify, at a predetermined time, ~~a slave device which is one of the master device candidates having the master function based on the other device information and the schedule information,~~ a slave device from among a plurality of slave devices which are the master device candidates indicated by the schedule information in a segment of at least time of day or season corresponding to the predetermined time based on the other device information, and operable to obtain predetermined information regarding a state change of the specified slave device from the specified slave device; and

a switch controlling section operable to ~~control switching of a master operation and a slave operation based on~~ compare the predetermined information regarding the state change of the specified slave device obtained by the device information processing section ~~and~~ with the predetermined information regarding the state change of the device included in the ~~device's~~ own ~~device information~~ information, and operable, when the state change of the specified slave device is smaller than the state change of the device, to switch between a master operation operated by the device and a slave operation operated by the specified slave device.

Claim 2 **(Canceled)**

3. **(Currently Amended)** The device according to claim 1, wherein the predetermined time is a time when a change occurs to the ~~device's~~ own device information of the device managed by the ~~device's~~ own device information managing section.

4. **(Currently Amended)** The device according to claim 3, wherein the change of the ~~device's~~ own device information of the device is a reduction in a remaining amount of battery life.

5. **(Currently Amended)** The device according to claim 3, wherein the change of the ~~device's~~ own device information of the device is a ~~deterioration~~ reduction in communication quality.

Claims 6-12 **(Canceled)**

13. **(Currently Amended)** The device according to claim 1, wherein the switch controlling section transmits the other device information managed by the other device information managing section to ~~a device newly performing the master operation~~ the specified slave device.

14. **(Currently Amended)** A master/slave switching method to be performed on a device currently performing a slave operation by a device currently performing a master operation, the method comprising ~~the steps of:~~

managing schedule information indicative of master device candidates by a plurality of segments of at least time of day or season;

specifying, at a predetermined time, a slave device from among a plurality of slave devices which are the master device candidates indicated by the schedule information in a segment of at least time of day or season corresponding to the predetermined time based on the other device information including at least availability of a master function of other devices connected to a network ~~a slave device which is one of master device candidates having a master function based on other device information including at least availability of the master function~~

~~of other devices connected to a network and schedule information indicative of master device candidates by predetermined segment;~~

obtaining predetermined information regarding a state change of the specified slave device from the specified slave device; and

~~controlling switching of the master operation and the slave operation based on comparing the predetermined information regarding the state change of the specified slave device obtained in the information obtaining of the predetermined information step and with predetermined information of device's regarding a state change of the device included in own device information of the device currently performing the master operation operation, and~~

switching, when the state change of the specified slave device is smaller than the state change of the device, between the master operation operated by the device and a slave operation operated by the specified slave device.

15. **(Currently Amended)** A computer-readable medium having a computer program stored thereon for causing a device currently performing a master operation to perform a method of performing a master/slave switching process on a device currently performing a slave operation, the computer program comprising the steps of:

matching schedule information indicative of master device candidates by a plurality of segments of at least time of day or season;

specifying, at a predetermined time, a slave device from among a plurality of slave devices which are the master device candidates indicated by the schedule information in a segment of at least time of day or season corresponding to the predetermined time based on other device information including at least availability of a master function of other devices connected to a network  
~~a slave device which is one of master device candidates having a master function based on other device information including at least availability of the master function of other devices connected to a network and schedule information indicative of master device candidates by predetermined segment;~~

obtaining predetermined information regarding a state change of the specified slave device from the specified slave device; and

~~controlling switching of the master operation and the slave operation based on comparing the predetermined information regarding the state change of the specified slave device obtained~~

~~in the information obtaining of the predetermined information step and with predetermined information of device's regarding a state change of the device indicated in own device information of the device currently performing the master operation operation; and~~  
switching, when the state change of the specified slave device is smaller than the state change of the device, between the master operation operate by the device and a slave operation operated by the specified slave device.

16. **(Currently Amended)** An integrated circuit for use in a device having a master function, the device being used in a network system in which a master device manages at least one slave device, the integrated circuit comprising:

~~a device's~~an own device information managing section operable to manage ~~device's own device information~~ information, which includes at least predetermined information, regarding a state change of a device including the integrated circuit;

an other device information managing section operable to manage other device information regarding at least one ~~another~~ other device connected to the network system, the other device information including at least availability of the master function;

a schedule information managing section operable to manage schedule information indicative of master device candidates ~~by predetermined segment~~ by a plurality of segments of at least time of day or season;

a device information processing section operable, when the device operates as the master device, to specify, at a predetermined time, a slave device from among a plurality of slave devices which are the master device candidates indicated by the schedule information in a segment of at least time of day or season corresponding to the predetermined time based on the other device information, a slave device which is one of the master device candidates having the master function based on the other device information and the schedule information, and operable to obtain predetermined information regarding a state change of the specified slave device from the specified slave device; and

a switch controlling section operable to ~~control switching of a master operation and a slave operation based on~~ compare the predetermined information regarding the state change of the specified slave device obtained by the device information processing section ~~and with the predetermined information regarding the state change of the device included in the device's own~~

device-information information, and operable, when the state change of the specified slave device is smaller than the state change of the device, to switch between a master operation operated by the device and a slave operation operated by the specified slave device.

17. **(New)** The device according to claim 1, wherein  
the master device candidates indicated by the schedule information in a segment of time of day is at least one device other than a device which is likely to be frequently used in the segment of the time of day.

18. **(New)** The device according to claim 1, wherein  
the master device candidates indicated by the schedule information in a segment of season is at least one device other than a device which is likely to be frequently used in the segment of season.